

A Wilburton Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Many of these stories were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014. They are supplemented by some selections 'From our Old Files' published in the Cambridge Independent Press and other notes.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbooks' of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2016

1900 February 26th

A rare occurrence took place at Wilburton a few days ago. A cow belonging to Mr George Sharp, a small farmer, gave birth to five calves. The new arrivals, which are somewhat below the normal size, are all alive and well. The same cow had twins 18 months ago.

1900 August 4th

The annual report on the maintenance of main roads and footpaths in the Isle of Ely shows that the paths at Wilburton have been kerbed with blue Staffordshire kerbing & made up with gravel.

1902 November 5th

Albert Pell of Wilburton Manor accused the land tax collector for the parish of Wentworth of wrongful seizure by distress of three lambs for land tax. He was the owner of about 1,000 acres in Wilburton and in 1900 had purchased two fields in Grunty Fen. He did not see how the land could be assessed for land tax in the parish of Wentworth. The defendant had come on to his land and taken away three lambs which had been sold by auction for £2 14s. But the judge found the land in question was properly comprised in the parish of Wentworth land had been taxed for over 100 years.

1903 January 2nd

Ely Rural Council's surveyor prepared a plan of the Grunty Fen road showing the proposed building at Wilburton station by the G.E.R. Company. Mr Pell said it was a one-storey building and the man was frequently complaining of the dampness of the house. It would be better if the Company would run up a second storey. It was going to be a very expensive matter to force them to remove the building. They agreed to withdraw their opposition provided the Railway Company undertook they would not further advance their buildings to the south-west corner of the station.

1903 January 23rd

Ely court heard that an eleven year old boy was employed to ride a horse attached to a machine which was cutting beans in a field in Grunty Fen when another lad fire a gun at some rabbits. This frightened the horse and the boy was thrown upon the knives, which cut off his left arm and two fingers of his right hand. There was a considerable argument as to the wages for a boy of 11 years; he had earned 1s.6d. the day before for driving cows whilst 2s. a day was a harvest wage, and not the standard wage. Compensation was fixed at 3s. a week as long as he was incapacitated.

1903 February 27th

Wilburton Parish Council drew attention to the ruinous condition of Twenty-pence Ferry Drawbridge, the owner of the bridge refusing to do any repairs to it. They think it desirable that a permanent bridge be put up. But it was a public road on one side of the ferry and a private one on the other. It was not a connection between two public roads. Wentworth people again recommended that the well at the end of the village should be deepened to the extent of 15 ft. But pumping machine would then be required and the water would have to be filtered before it was used for drinking purposes. People were willing to pay the money. Samples of water from both wells in the village had been condemned for drinking purposes

1903 June 3rd

Ely court heard an interesting case relating to Grunty Fen which arose out of an agreement with respect to cutting corn. James Howard had a horse and man and William Driver had a machine for cutting wheat and they came to an agreement that they would first cut Howard's crop and afterwards Driver's. Driver's son employed an 11-year-old boy to ride the foremost horse but it became restive and the poor lad was thrown and received injuries

1903 August 14th

Ely Council considered the site for a small-pox hospital, a temporary building of wood and iron; they agreed to hire 22 acres of land in Grunty Fen, two miles from any village. A case of smallpox had occurred at Wilburton after somebody was allowed to come from a house at Cambridge where the disease existed. None of them were safe if that sort of thing could occur. Dr Anningson said there was another possible cause but did not speak in a tone that could be heard by the reporter.

1906 04 12

Everitt accident – 06 04 12a-c1906

1906 09 13

A number of cases of sacrilege have been reported and with so many vagrants on the road churchwardens should keep a sharp eye on those who enter. Two brass vases have been stolen from Arrington and another from Hatley St George. At Wilburton thieves carried off two brass candlesticks and smashed the contributions box, stealing five shillings. Next day the alms box at Haddenham was tampered with but the contents, which consisted of twopence, was not touched. 06 09 13

1907 02 01

Within three miles of Witcham Gravel is another unique parish, that of Grunty Fen. It contains a population of 74, boasts of two railway stations, but has neither church, school, post office nor shop. The clergy of Stretham and Wilburton voluntarily minister to the spiritual needs as it is not within the limits of any ecclesiastical parish. 07 02 01b

1908 11 02

An inquest heard that the landlord of the Chequers, Wilburton, had served in the army and retired with the rank of Quarter-Master Sergeant. He had a substantial pension but had worried about his brewer's bill for £27 which seemed to prey on his mind. He kept taking it from his pocket and reading it over and over again. David Wadlow, labourer, said he had opened the yard gates so the publican could enter with his horse and cart. He did not say the man was sober. William Haylock later found him lying in the yard and sent for Dr Howe 08 11 20 p2

1911 04 21

Edward Peters, veterinary surgeon from Haddenham claimed damages from A.J. Pell of Wilburton Manor, (chairman of the Isle of Ely Quarter Sessions) in respect of a collision at Witcham Toll. Peters had been sitting in his cart outside the Horse and Gate when his dog ran in front of a motor driven by Pell and got entangled between the bonnet and the off side wheel. The vehicle swerved and collided with the cart, carrying it 60 yards and throwing out Mr Peters who was injured. Other motorists said the dog has also chased their vehicles and the case was dismissed. 11 04 21

1913 01 10

Wilburton Hudsons, general smiths, entertain employees of Haddenham, Wilburton & Stretham to supper

1913 01 17

Haddenham. Wilburton Plough Monday

1913 05 16

The housing situation was in a serious state, councillors were told. Some people wanted to get married, but there were no homes for them. In Wilburton there were three families living in two-roomed cottages. Some dwelling houses in Downham parish were so bad that the people suffered through living in them. But Mr Darby said that one old parishioner had suffered so much at the Hundred Foot Bank through living in a cottage having one only room down and one up, that he reached the age of 96, and his wife, who was still living, was now 94. 13 05 16 p11 CIP

1914 09 25

Pell commission, Wilburton

1914 10 09

Military roads - Stretham to Soham, one of four to allow different armies to move from west to east at same time without going through Cambridge. The first from Potton though Harston to Whittlesford and Pampisford and on to London Road near Hildersham. Sinuous road through Grantchester and Trumpington on to Cherry Hinton and Fulbourn and away on the Newmarket Road. Another down Huntingdon Road, across Midsummer Common and along Newmarket Road. Huntingdon, Wilburton & Stretham where new road would start. Newmarket RDC to make and improve road from Cam through Wicken. At one point there was a green track where the whole of the road would be constructed. At Wicken there was another piece of road about eight feet wide where flint would need to be pressed in. Through Wicken the road was a good second class decent road.

1914 11 06

Wilburton enlistment – Alsop, Sharp, Sulman

1914 12 18

Wilburton – Hudson's contract horseshoes

Wilburton – Christmas gifts for front

1916 08 30

Death of Major A. J. Pell. The death occurred suddenly on Monday at Tattenham, near Chester, where he was officiating as instructor of musketry, of Major Albert Julian Pell, J.P., of Wilburton Manor. Major Pell had a long record of public service in the County and the Isle of Ely, in which he had resided since 1891. At the time of his death he was holding the office of chairman of the Isle of Ely Quarter Sessions, vice-chairman of the County Council of the Isle of Ely, chairman of the Fulbourn Asylum Visitors, chairman of the Haddenham Level Commissioners, chair of the Grunty Fen Drainage Committee, chairman of the General Committee of the Governors of Addenbrooke's Hospital, vice-chairman of the Territorial Force Association, a Deputy Lieutenant of the County and Lord of the Manor of Wilburton. He was High Sheriff in 1909. He was called to the Bar of Lincoln's Inn in 1890.

1922 June 14th

The "pros and cons" of a proposed joint water scheme were reviewed at a public inquiry convened by the Ministry of Health held at Ely. Mr H.J.Martin explained that for the most part the inhabitants of Littleport drank water from the River Ouse. Mr A.K. Campbell put in an analyst's report to the effect that water from the Ouse taken four miles south of Littleport was polluted with sewage and was unfit for drinking purposes. Mr T.Peake: "I would like to remind you that Ely City empties its sewage into the waters which Littleport has to drink; also that last year the rivers were absolutely unfit for drinking purposes - they were stagnant and putrid". A feature of the enquiry was the stout opposition put up by the parishes of Haddenham, Wilburton, Stretham and Little Downham. A solitary supporter from Stretham explained that he did not attend a public meeting there - which was unanimous against the scheme - because had he done so he would probably have been "crucified"

1925 July 22nd

The annual show held under the auspices of the Wilburton Women's Institute and village took place at St Peter's Hall. "Without a doubt the finest show ever held in Wilburton" was the remark made by the horticultural judge. Here were staged some of the finest specimens the district could produce. Some fine black currants were exhibited by Mr J. Sneesby, Mr W. Norfolk swept the board with some perfect tomatoes & Mrs Healey Wilson had a mauve colour table decoration which claimed first prize.

1927 February 19th

Ely Rural District Council have offered the County Council part of a field in the parish of Stretham if they are prepared to construct a new road across it connecting the road from Wilburton to Stretham with the Cambridge Road. It would be a main road, 60 feet wide and the Ministry of Transport would make a grant of 50%. The Surveyor said there had been an alarming increase in road traffic during the winter months with a consequent increase of damage to the roads.

1927 October 19th

www.mikepetty.org.uk bit.ly/CambsCollection

The Ely coroner sat for four hours at the Red Lion, Stretham to inquire into the death of two men who met with a tragic end whilst motor cycling to their homes. The constable at Wilburton said he had received complaints respecting a motor lorry stationary on the Wilburton Road. He made an examination of the rear lamp, which was not alight so he obtained some oil and lit the lamp. Mr Warren later asked for permission to go and put some lights on it. Dr Charles Howe of Haddenham said he received a telephone message that two men had run into a stationary lorry and found the bodies lying on the grass beside the road.

1927 October 28th

Chesterton RDC considered the proposed erection of a bridge at Twenty-man's Ferry, near Cottenham. An application was received from Wilburton parish council that the bridge should be erected and the road be put in good repair. It would relieve the traffic from the Ely main road and relieve the congestion which was very acute on that road. They ought to get the feelings of the Cottenham people; the bridge would be a bigger benefit to them more than anybody else.

1928 Janu 23rd

Ald L. Tebbutt objected to proposals for a bridge over the Old West River at Twentypence Ferry. Cottenham would be linked to two villages in the Isle of Ely – Wilburton and Haddenham, but he did not see that even Cottenham had very great interest in the matter. It was a very awkward road from Cottenham to Cambridge through Histon. There were so many corners at Histon – it was one of the worst places in the country. If they spent the money in putting Histon straight it would be of much greater benefit.

1928 March 30th

Owners of land served by Twentypence Road, Cottenham agreed to offer the sum of 30s. per acre as their share towards the cost of making the road a public highway as part of a scheme to make a through route to the Isle of Ely. The Isle of Ely & Cambridgeshire County Councils are considering the erection of a bridge at Twentypence Ferry.

1928 June 30th

The proposed Twentypence Ferry Bridge would cost £8,000 and the road £9,300. The Government Road Board would give 75% and the chief landowners £1,500. Then there was the road from the church to the Jolly Waterman which would have to be brought up to second-class standard. It might seem a large amount but it would relive some of the traffic from the Ely to Cambridge road. But was the District Council wise in incurring a debt of £2,000 when in six months time they might cease to be a road authority as the County Council was going to take over all the roads.

1928 July 4th

A verdict of accidental death was returned at the inquest into the Rev Henry Atkinson, vicar of Wilburton who died from the effects of injuries received in a collision with a motor car. The Vicar was accustomed to riding a bicycle and was going to fetch some hymn books for a Guild meeting. The driver said he saw a man on a bicycle with a leather Gladstone bag on the handlebars; he seemed to lose control and it went across in front of him. The jury expressed the opinion that a high hedge which obscured the view near the entrance to the Vicarage drive should be cut down to a reasonable height.

1928 July 18th

An important scheme for the making of a new road from Cottenham to Wilburton and the erection of a bridge over the Old West River near Twentypence Ferry will come before the County Council at their next meeting. They considered a petition from inhabitants in Horningsea and Waterbeach that the council should take over Clayhithe Bridge and abolish the tolls but are unable to recommend the purchase of the bridge at present. It was only 11 ft 6 inches wide and could not be widened without being rebuilt; it would only carry a vehicle of an axle load of eight tons and the approach roads were difficult.

1930 11 06

When the Bishop of Ely attended St Peter's church, Wilburton, to dedicate their new organ he indulged in some straight speaking. The organ was dedicated to their former Vicar, Henry Atkinson, killed while performing his duties, but in order to secure it the parish had neglected urgent repairs to the roof that was in a very serious condition and could not wait. They had also not subscribed to the diocesan fund and this was the reason why none of the surrounding clergy was present. 30 11 06c & d

1931 03 20

Three steam lorries, two with trailers, representing a weight of sixty tons were used to test the strength of the new bridge over the Old West River at Twentypence Ferry. There was a crowd of over a hundred interested spectators. Several motor coach companies are applying to run services over the new road between Cottenham and Wilburton, shortly to be opened to traffic, which will prove another link between the north and south of the county. 31 03 20d

1931 04 03

The first accident on the new Twentypence Road between Wilburton and Cottenham happened on Saturday. Mr Charles Lack and three passengers had been to view the new bridge and on the return journey failed to negotiate a severe bend with the result that his car skidded and finished in a ditch. No one was seriously injured. The car, an Austin 'six' was not badly damaged and with some difficulty was replaced on the road, Mr Lack being able to drive it home under its own power 31 04 03o

1931 07 24

Reliance Coach Services of Cottenham had three coaches and had contracted to purchase another vehicle for £1,500. They operated services from Cambridge to Cottenham and Willingham; their buses ran five minutes before Ortona's but usually they waited for the Ortona drivers to start up and then got away faster in their smaller vehicle. Now they planned a new service from Haddenham via the Twentypence Bridge 31 07 24b & c

1932 08 12

Suicide Arthur Savidge, Twentypence Road, Wilburton – worried that father had lost farm – 32 08 12a

1934 01 15

Haddenham / Wilburton attempted murder – 34 01 15

1934 04 27

A smallholder from White Cross Road, Wilburton appeared in court for passing a traffic signal at red whilst driving a motor car in Bridge Street. He told the policeman he had never seen them before and don't know how they worked. Nobody had told him what they were for or anything about them. In Ely they had policemen and A.A. men on the corners. The magistrates fined him ten shillings saying it was distressing that a man should be on the public road driving a motor car and not know what traffic signals meant. 34 04 27

1936 01 03

Ely RDC has accepted tenders from Messrs Grensells of Kettering for wiring council houses in Ely Road and West End Sutton, Tower Road, Main Street and Cross Lane Downham, the Cambridge and Ely Roads in Stretham together with Hill Row, Hop Row and Station Road, Haddenham, Millfield Littleport and Haddenham Road at Wilburton. The Beds., Cambs. & Hunts Electricity Company will make a connection charge of £1 for each of the 94 houses– 36 01 03c

1936 02 06

Demolition of property on the top corner, Haddenham would improve visibility for traffic proceeding from Wilburton to Sutton but a more comprehensive improvement could be effected if the adjoining baker's shop in Hop Row could be acquired. Councillors recommended it be acquired and demolished and the existing kerb and footpath line be set back seven feet. At Littleport there would be a small piece of land to spare after improvement at the junction of High Street and

Hempfield Road which could be used for the erection of a public convenience. But there will be no more traffic lights as these are an expensive luxury 36 02 06

1936 05 12

Andrew Norfolk, Wilburton fruit farmer bankrupt – 36 03 24a 36 05 12b

1936 05 13

Haddenham and Wilburton Nursing Association started in 1915, Nurse Lowe was appointed district nurse in 1917 and still held the position. Last year she made 3,851 nursing and casual visits with 31 maternity cases and 505 health and school inspection visits. She had treated six patients sent home from hospital, one of whom she attended daily for seven months. Nurse Lowe had not missed a day's work through illness or any other cause. Her salary and special fees came to £160 7s 5d with a £29 10s. allowance for a car and new tyres. The village Hospital Parade Committees might be approached for a donation. 36 05 13

1936 06 05

Wilburton is the centre of an extensive fruit-growing industry but has a shortage of working-class houses for those employed in agriculture. As owners of existing cottages maintain their property in a good state of repair there are no slum clearance areas and so no public grants are available towards the building of further much-needed houses, the Parish Council say 36 06 05

1936 06 29

Boy Scouts and Wolf Cubs gathered a thousand strong at Ely to take part in a huge county rally. Six hundred camped over the weekend in the delightful surroundings of the Cathedral Park. The numerous tents dotted here and there among the trees provided a pleasant spectacle. Saturday brought 120 wolf cubs from Cambridge who chose the novel method of travelling by river, starting from Victoria Bridge. Amongst troops present were Prickwillow, Pampisford, Wilburton and the Whittlesford Sea Scouts 36 06 29a

1936 09 04

Dispute over dyke in Grunty Fen at Whitecross Road, Wilburton – 36 09 04b

1936 12 04

Isle of Ely Highways Committee discussed various road improvements. There may be a bypass at Chatteris from Carters Bridge to link up with Warboys Road but this was a huge scheme. A bottleneck on the Lynn Road north of Ely was caused by a cottage standing close to the road: this could be demolished with a new home built further back. In Stretham the Cambridge Road between the new council houses should be widened with an island at the junction of Wilburton Road. They were faced with this monstrous expenditure because of the foolish position in which the houses had been built. 36 12 04 & a

37 09 20

During a severe thunderstorm a ball of fire set alight two stacks at Mitchell Hill Farm, Twentypence Road, Cottenham. They were right in the middle of the farmyard but firemen stopped the flames spreading to the farmhouse and nearby wooden barns, using water from a pond. The lightning struck a wire clothes line strung between a corner of a barn and a tree then travelled back along an aerial wire to the barn and thence it fired the stacks. Stock, including a newly-born calf, was removed for safety. 37 09 20

1938 01 13

Wilburton new school needed due unsatisfactory condition of present one. There was no room for playground 38 01 13

1938 01 14

Theft hens from Bertie Hazel of Wilburton – 38 01 14

1938 01 25

Amos Newell, labourer of Hill Row, Haddenham told the court he'd left an overcoat in a living van along with an axe which George Fairchild, farmer, identified as his property. Arthur Gillett, farm labourer of Twentypence Road, Wilburton, said he'd been offered the axe for half-a-crown by an airman who said he'd found it. The man told magistrates he'd run away from RAF Cardington with only a shilling in his pocket and had lived on turnips and cabbages. He'd not have taken the items if he'd known they belonged to 'two old gents such as these' 38 01 25

1938 02 02

New school required at Wilburton and Sutton school enlarged – 38 02 02

1938 03 28

Thomas Gregg, a familiar face on the Market Hill, has retired after 30 years as a colporteur. He came to Cambridge in 1908 and has sold Bibles, Testaments and texts on his market stall near the fountain every Saturday since. It was often used as a meeting place for preachers and people from the villages. He also works as a lay preacher and travels round on his bicycle. "I have cycled to chapels as far away as Ely and once preached five sermons at Wilburton on one Sunday", he said 38 03 28a

1939 03 08

The RDC heard that a drain needed for Stretham council houses should run inside the recreation ground and join up with the existing sewer. The Parish Council Chairman had said they'd be no difficulty but the council then refused permission. If they brought their outlet to the open ditch it would create a nuisance and the parish council would have to pay for it. That would bring them to their senses. 39 03 08 & a Wilburton sewage & evacuation scheme

1939 07 26

Vicar of Wilburton opposed the rating assessment of the new vicarage: the individual who assessed it took it for a rich eccentric's whim instead of a poor man's house. It was not only small but of a different class to the old vicarage which was a gentleman's residence. That had grounds but this had barely an acre which was to be reduced by widening the road. It was no more than a couple of council houses and too close to the cemetery. It had a flat roof because they could not afford to pay for a pitched one. He'd had nothing but trouble and if there was no reduction he would stop building. The appeal was refused. 39 07 26b

1952 October 16th

Wilburton parents signed a petition against proposals to convert the Manor of Wilburton into a residential school for educationally sub-normal children. The present village school was black-listed as far back as 1912 and condemned in 1937 so a new school was long overdue. Its position on the main street which carried an incessant stream of traffic constituted a daily danger to the children. The Manor standing at the end of a long drive was part of the heritage of the village and could be adapted to make an ideal and beautiful school for village children.

1953 February 21st

Eleven members of a Wilburton family have a record of longevity that will take some beating. Four brothers and seven sisters, their combined ages add up to 872 years. In order of seniority they are: Mrs Elizabeth Moxon who is 86, Herbert Warren (Wilburton) 84, Edward Warren 83, Mrs Rebecca Everitt 82, Mrs Georgina Ashman 81, Alfred Ashman 79, Mrs Flora Wilds 78, Mrs Mary Clark 77, Arthur Herbert Warren 66, Miss Clara Warren 74 and Ethel, aged 72.

1958 03 17

A Hawker Hunter jet aircraft from RAF Waterbeach crashed into a ploughed field at Hinton Hall, Haddenham. It was seen to dive 'straight into the ground' and an explosion followed the impact. The pilot baled out and landed at the back of some Council houses at Wilburton, 800 yards away 58 03 17

1958 05 22

Since May 15th ten outbreaks of fowl pest have been confirmed within a radius of eight miles of Ely in the parishes of Little Thetford, Wilburton, Coveney, Witchford and Manea. An order under the Fowl Pest Restrictions now comes into force and poultry may not be moved except under licence. The holding of poultry store markets is also prohibited. 58 05 22b

1960 06 02

William Everitt of Wilburton is 101 years old but longevity does not prevent him from being active. He is often seen working in his garden. Wilburton born and bred, he spent 11 years of his youth away from the village as a groom and valet in service at several large houses in different countries before returning to take up fruit-growing and farming and still rents two small-holdings. He became one of the first members of the Parish Council in 1894 and for 10 years was chairman. His wife, incidentally is aged 90. 60 06 02

1962 06 20

Eleanor Summerfield, the actress who stars in the film 'Petticoat Pirates' with Charlie Drake, and her husband Leonard Sachs, well-known as the chairman of the BBC tv 'Good Old Days' have bought a weekend cottage at Wilburton. Most Fridays they motor down from London with their two sons and at the moment they are attacking the garden. The cottage was advertised as having a river running by the garden and is in an isolated position. Mrs Sachs always thought she disliked flat country but as begun to appreciate the magic of the fens and the wonderful expanse of sky. The people are 'so gentle, kind and good natured' 62 06 20

1964 01 30

Once a day, at 1.15 pm, a little diesel train leaves Ely station, goes eight miles and arrives at Sutton. Then at 3.20 pm it turns round and goes back again. Hauling three goods wagons, it stops first at Little Thetford where the driver and fireman nip down smartly from the cab, open and close the gates, and continue the trip. It carries mainly fuel, with possible stops at Stretham, Wilburton and Haddenham stations. Thirty years this little-known line carried a passenger service. It was constructed under the Grunty Fen Railway Act of 1864 and the Friends of Haddenham hope to run a centenary passenger special. 64 01 30b

1964 05 01

Wilburton village photo feature – 64 05 01c

1964 05 16

Wilburton Best Kept Village sign unveiled – 64 05 16

1964 06 23

Wilburton church renovation appeal – 64 06 23a

1974 January 12th

The economic crisis has forced a Haddenham baker to cut his van deliveries by half, leaving an estimated 600 customers in Cottenham, Haddenham and Wilburton to find alternative suppliers of their daily bread. Mr John Wright said that he was pulling three of his five vans off the road permanently. The national association of master bakers said the profit margin per loaf was too small to make van deliveries economically viable. Barker's bakery, Betabake and the Co-operative Society all have shops in Cottenham

1974 September 25th

Wine from an Isle of Ely vineyard at Wilburton may be on sale for the first time in the spring. Harvesting will go ahead in four weeks time. "The crop is ripening up very well at present", said Mr Norman Sneesby, who works the vineyard with his family. It is planned to sell the wine under the name of St Etheldreda. She was founder of the monastery church at Ely whose monks produced wine in medieval times

1976 April 15th

The Twentypence Inn, Wilburton, claims to provide reasonably priced meals. The Sunday lunch menu offered a wide choice for £2 a head. It included prawn and peach cocktail, oxtail soup and ravioli for starters; and turkey and ham salad, roast duckling, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, trout and lemon sole as the main course. This was followed by fruit salads from the fruit trolley. A carafe of red wine was £1.35

1976 September 29th

Wine production in the region will be more than doubled this year as vineyards reach maturity. But prospects of a vintage year have been shattered by the recent warm damp weather which has proved an ideal climate for diseases. At Linton Mr Sam Alper of Chilford Hall said they were now pressing the grapes. Mr G. Reece of Gamlingay Vineyard is finding the disease troubles "a bit of a nuisance". Mr Norman Sneesby thinks his vines at Wilburton will bring a yield of ten tons while Mr Ron Jeffries of Saffron Walden who started Wenden Vineyard four years ago hopes to improve on last years 1,000 bottles from his one acre site.

1982 10 04

More than 70 members of the Gorsuch family travelled to Wilburton to trace their routes. They were particularly interested in Dr John Gorsuch who died in mysterious circumstances and was buried in the village. He was Rector of Walkern, near Stevenage, but was a Royalist and fled at the outbreak of the Civil War. Nobody knows how he got to Wilburton where he was suffocated to death in a haystack in 1648 82 10 04

1983 05 25

East Cambs planning chief slammed the 'hysterical local opposition' each time they put forward plans for a permanent gypsy site. Already Wilburton, Mepal and Little Thetford are no go areas because of the local opposition. It means the job of solving the problem becomes progressively more difficult. The only alternative was to abandon the whole thing. Councillors agreed no action would be taken to prosecute longstanding residents on unauthorised sites until more suitable alternative plots were available 83 05 25 p7

1986 11 14

From his manor house at The Berristead, Wilburton Sir David Hughes runs one of Cambridgeshire's most unusual businesses. It specialises in the production of brass and bronze figures, principally for use as car mascots. Most are exported to the United States. Now a former fruit store near the village church has been reconditioned for use as a foundry and workshop to help increase production. 86 11 14

.1987 10 28

Consortium Development, the largest housing construction group in the country, announced plans for a new town in the fens. The proposals were unveiled minutes before the Government inquiry into the Structure Plan entered its final phases of dealing with proposed new townships. The combined finances of the consortium, which includes Barratt, Wimpey and Laing, ensures it has the strength to go ahead with the development of homes for nearly 8,000 people between Wilburton and Stretham. But three-quarters of local villagers are completely opposed and will do all they can to stop it. 87 10 28

1987 12 23

The Chairman of East Cambridgeshire District Council has hit back at opponents of its bid to establish a new town in the Wilburton area. A major row has blown up after Wilburton Parish Council said it had lost all confidence in their integrity. The villagers fear a town half the size of Ely would swamp the existing community. But the District Council welcomes the development. It is one of about 20 sites and if the Inspector rejects it, one of the others would be chosen, he says 87 12 23

1988 04 05

Wilburton villagers have launched a campaign to stop a new town being built on their doorsteps. The Parish Council has been involved in a major row with ECDC over their handling of the issue but

are fighting against enormous odds. "We are a small community threatened with destruction. Our village life, our environment, is about to be swallowed up in a large development", they claim. Now they have won support from MP, Malcolm Moss, who has sent a letter condemning the proposal to the Environment Minister. 88 04 05

1989 03 21

The Government has approved the County structure plan saying yes to plans for a village of 1,500 homes on the A10 north of Cambridge but no to a new village west or east of the city on the A45. A public inquiry will be held to decide which side it should be built. Around 800 homes have been shifted into Fenland and draft plans to build a further 63,000 homes have been rubber-stamped. However villagers at Stretham and Wilburton will continue to fight proposals for 'Westmere' 89 03 21, 22a

1989 05 17

Tom Ryan has just been summoned to 10 Downing Street from his workshop in the old school building at Wilburton. An outstanding craftsman, he has been asked to quote a price for gilding a set of valuable Hepplewhite chairs in the Blue Room. Not long ago Tom completed another commission in the Prime Minister's home. Occasionally older villagers pop into Tom's workshop to remember having lessons in the former schoolroom where he practices his craft which includes lacquer and japanning work. 89 05 17a

1989 11 02

A railway station proposed for the planned new town of Waterfenton, near Chittering, would be a 'tremendous plus', while a dual carriageway will link it with the main A10, developers claim. It will comprise 1,500 homes (capable of expansion to 3,000) with a mix of rented and owner-occupied properties and will rely on Cambridge for central services. This is one of three rival schemes being considered at an enquiry along with another near Denney Abbey and 'Westmere' between Stretham and Wilburton. 89 11 02